



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Community,

All across the school, teachers at WIS have begun the school year with an emphasis on inquiry, identity, and community. This approach is in line with our school's definition of learning and our commitment to student-centred learning. It is also based on sound educational research.

In their landmark report, "[From a nation at risk to a nation at hope](#)", the Aspen Institute looked at a wide range of research and concluded that the social and emotional health of a school had a tremendously significant impact on academic development. The report concludes with six recommendations:

1. Set a clear vision that broadens the definition of student success to prioritise the whole child
2. Transform learning settings so they are safe and supportive for all young people
3. Change instruction to teach social, emotional, and cognitive skills; embed these skills in academics and in school-wide practices
4. Build adult expertise in child development
5. Align resources and leverage partners in the community to address the whole child
6. Forge closer connections between research and practice

By integrating social, emotional, and academic development, every learner at WIS will be well positioned to develop a positive self-identity, a spirit of joyfulness, and habits of resilience. We meet each student where they are at. We want each learner to be proud of who they are. Then we will journey together from there!

Here are some photos of students in the Primary as they start the year by exploring concepts of identity.



PARENT INFORMATION PORTAL
Click here for more information

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Dates to Remember

August 2021

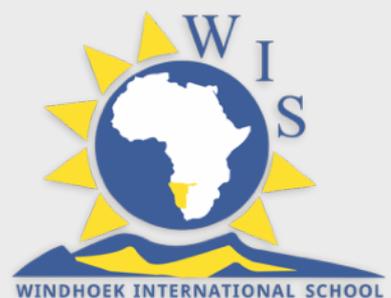
- **26:** Heroes' Day
- **27:** School closed

September 2021

- **08:** CIS Virtual Exploration

October 2021

- **08:** End of Term 1
- **11 - 15:** October break



Teacher Feature



Elsa Swanepoel
Early Years 3 Homeroom

What is your educational background?

I hold a Montessori teaching diploma for 3-6 year olds as well as a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Development) from the University of South Africa. I also just recently completed my Master in Education (MEd) through the University of Melbourne specialising in International Education.

Where did you grow up?

After moving around a bit when I was younger we settled right here in Windhoek when I was 6. Thus I consider myself a true 'Windhoeker'.

Where were you before joining WIS?

My first teaching job was at Little Penguins Montessori here in Windhoek. After spending a couple of years at Little Penguins I decided to broaden my horizons and move abroad. I have spent time teaching at different schools in China and most recently at the International School of Myanmar.

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As a school community, we have also begun the school year by exploring our school's identity. We are still compiling the responses from the Vision 2025 Survey, so if you have not yet done so then please fill out [this form](#). We will update you with the findings after the Heroes Day long weekend.

Sincerely,
Ethan Van Drunen

Teacher Feature Continued

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Dear WIS Community,

This past week in the Primary School, all classes from EY to Grade 5 have been busy developing Essential Agreements. In the Primary Years Programme, the term Essential Agreements is used instead of class rules. Whereas rules communicate that we value 'compliance', *agreements* signal we value an engaging learning environment in which children have voice, choice, ownership and responsibility. Everyone works collaboratively to establish and understand agreements of how the class will function. Meaningful agreements focus on beliefs about learning, what helps us and what hinders us, and what we value as a learner and as a school. Importantly, agreements are lived (not just laminated up on the wall) and revisited often throughout the year.

School-wide Essential Agreements

Essential Agreements bind us as a learning community and communicate what we find important. So what are some overarching Essential Agreements we have developed in the Primary School at WIS?



Essential Agreements work because they are not imposed, and the children themselves decide what the agreements are. This implicitly sows the seeds for the democratic functioning and participation of students in the classroom. We often see students reminding each other of the Agreements rather than complaining to the teacher.

I would like to encourage all of our parents to try out their own version of Essential Agreements at home. And we'd love to hear from you about your own experiences implementing them!

Essential Agreements were the focus of our assembly this week. A recording can be found [here](#).

Pictures below:

What motivated you to become a teacher?

The opportunity to make a difference in students' lives as well as contributing to making the world a better place.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Seeing students grow socially and emotionally throughout the year. And of course the smiles, hugs and laughs we share throughout the day.

What do you think are important qualities an international school teacher should have?

Being internationally minded. As an international school teacher you need to show understanding and respect towards different cultures and beliefs.

What are your hobbies?

I love the outdoors, going hiking and camping. In my spare time I also really enjoy reading or experimenting with new recipes (big foodie over here).

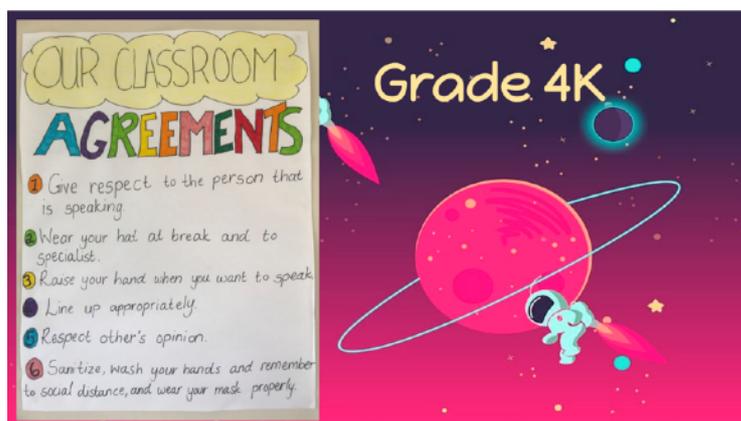
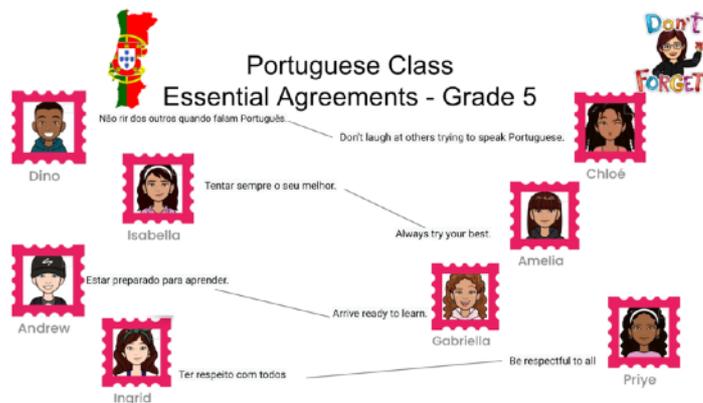
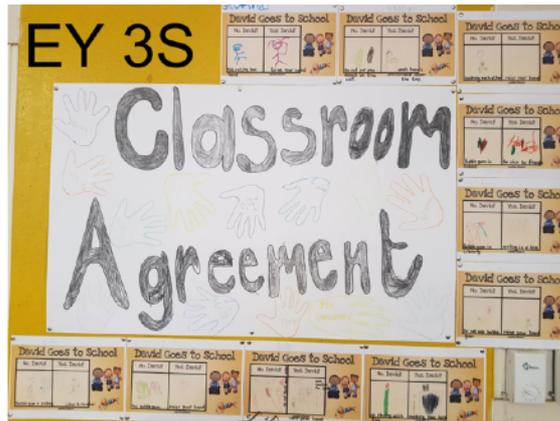
How would you describe your personality?

An optimistic, fun loving introvert that can be a little loud at times.

What's your favourite educational motto that you use with students?

'It's ok to make mistakes.' or 'We learn through our mistakes.'

- ◆ Do not run in class.
- ◆ Be nice to your friends.
- ◆ Do not push others.
- ◆ Wear hat outside.
- ◆ Wash hands before eating.
- ◆ No bubblegum at school.
- ◆ Respect each other.
- ◆ Sharing is caring.



Warm regards,
Marcelle van Leenen

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Your future - your choice - your decision - your engagement

When it comes to making decisions about 'life after school', there is a lot to consider - what do I want to do, where do I want to go, how will we finance this, what are my choices, what is realistic to want to do?

As I recently said to the Grade 11s, you cannot be anything you want to be, but if you are realistic in your expectations and choices, you can become what you want to be. This process, however, is a lengthy one and needs a lot of engagement, research and conversations. Conversations need to happen with those, who can make your decisions and choices become reality - parents, other family members, your peers who can advise and give their opinions, teachers and myself, who is responsible for career guidance at WIS.

Our high school students are always given a multitude of opportunities to engage in career exploration. If they actively engage in the process, there comes a time, when the effort and time spent in this research pays off and there is an outcome that leads us to a career, profession or calling that is meant for us.

I want to quote one of our former students who wrote about his experiences. The path has chosen for himself at the moment is quite different to what he initially wanted to do. However, this is leading him toward his goals and is fulfilling and enjoyable for him:

"Soon after graduating from WIS in 2020, I was admitted for an apprenticeship training position ("Ausbildung") at the Medical Clinic of the University of Erlangen in Germany for a Medical Technical Laboratory course.

The three-year course is split up into several theoretical and practical subjects that all revolve around medical sciences (such as Clinical Chemistry, Microbiology, Haematology, Histology, Anatomie etc).

Shortly after getting accepted at this vocational school, I went through the ordeal of moving countries during the prime of the global Covid pandemic.

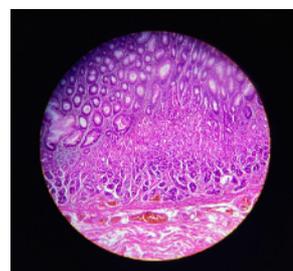
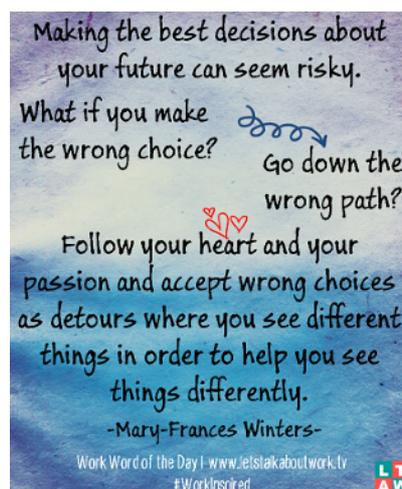
Due to this school being a "Berufsfachschule", i.e. a vocational training centre and not a University, I had in-person classes since I started, and therefore I also had practical studies in proper laboratory facilities.

In the beginning, I had some issues with adapting to scientific terms in the German language, but now towards the end of the first year of my studies, I can safely say that I'm doing well and I'm really glad to be opting to do this training course.

I hope you are all keeping well at WIS, and that you are staying safe and healthy during these tough times. I'll be sure to come by WIS next time that I am in Namibia and to say hi." - Bennet Krappmann

Like Bennet, there are many students who left school and went into a very different direction to what they had initially thought. It turns out, however, that they become successful in their studies and careers, because they spent the time to reflect and look ahead with an open mind to reach their goals.

We will be having a guest speaker today (Friday) who will speak to our high school students on 'the general perspectives in life: self awareness, activating leadership, solution oriented thinking and being a world citizen.



These skills and approaches will further open some thinking processes for our students to work on their future plans and get some insights in the industry needs in today's professional world.

At the moment, I am organising a "[Virtual University Exploration Day](#)" for international schools in Africa in collaboration with the Council of International Schools. This day will happen on **8 September 2021 from 11:00 - 14:00**. We currently have around 15 schools from around Africa and 60 universities from across the world attending this event. More information will follow in the next Oryx.

Regards,
Maggie Reiff



CIS University Exploration Day | Africa

- Meet college and university representatives from all over the world at this **free virtual** event.
- One week prior to the fair date, all university booths will be open and remain accessible to you for pre-fair information browsing.
- Learn from university representatives at live educational sessions.
- Representatives from all universities will be online and available to speak with you directly via one-on-one text or video chat or group video chat.

WEDNESDAY
8 September
2021

9:00-12:00 GMT
10:00-13:00 W. Africa Time
11:00-14:00 CAT
12:00-15:00 EAT



COUNCIL OF
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



For more **information:**
<https://cis.swoogo.com/africa21>

Mathematical Mindsets

Grade 7 and 8 students spent some time at the beginning of the school year discussing mathematical mindsets. They watched a video made by Jo Boaler, a professor at Stanford University, about misconceptions and preconceived ideas about mathematics.



Four important boosting messages came out from the video, and the discussions that followed:

- Anyone can learn Maths to any level - it has been scientifically proven that there is no such thing as having a "Maths brain" or not having a "Maths brain".
- Believe in yourself - it is important to have a growth mindset!
- Mistakes and struggle are good - that is when your brain is growing!
- Speed is not important - deep thinking and understanding is, along with thinking creatively and visually!

Students consolidated these ideas by working in groups to create posters so that other students can benefit from these boosting messages.

Lian Cohen

IGCSE results

We once again celebrate our students' remarkable IGCSE results. The school community is elated.

This year 60% of our students passed with distinction (5 or more subjects with a A or A* grade and at least 2 subjects above a C grade) or merit (5 or more subjects with a C grade or above + at least 2 subjects above an F grade). Across all subjects we achieved 70% A* - C grades.

Congratulations to our top performers:

- **Sophie Lindy** with 7 A*s and 2 As
- **Janice Kennedy** with 7 A*s and 1 A
- **Pohamba Kapolo** with 3 A*s and 5 As
- **Lara Gross** with 2 A*s and 6 As
- **Leonhardt Fischer-Buder** with 2 A*s and 4 As
- **Yilin Chen** with 1 A* and 5 As
- **Davan Pokolo** with 1 A* and 5 As
- **Mikhail Burger** with 2 A*'s and 3 As

It was a particularly difficult (almost) two years and we wish to commend all our IGCSE students for their hard work and amazing accomplishments. The continued success in IGCSE is a testament to WIS's high academic standards, excellent teaching and committed students.

Johan Meyer
IGCSE coordinator

IB Approaches to Learning

Social Skills/Thinking Skills - History Alive



Within the framework of working at this IB world school as a Diploma Programme educator, I am tasked with facilitating my History students' skill development using the [IB DP Approaches to Learning](#). Examine this [visual of the IB DP Diploma Programme model](#), and notice the prominent place given to the APPROACHES TO LEARNING. Considerable attention has been focused these first weeks of my lessons on 'Social Skills' and 'Thinking Skills' as DP History learners have collaboratively grappled with [historiographical Theory of Knowledge-oriented challenging questions](#) like: *'Can one know objective truth in History? And to what extent are historians unbiased in their writings?'*



(see www.activehistory.co.uk which FYI we have a school password for and it's username: windhoekis / password: namibia). The Grade 12 higher level historians have had teamwork discussions on the Arab-Israeli conflict's four wars while the Grade 11 standard level historians have grappled with questions associated with the Civil Rights era (1954-1965) and learned by watching ['Awakenings'](#) the Public Broadcasting TV Eyes on the Prize documentary.

Rick Fitzpatrick

May 2021 IBDP results in comparison

On 6th July the International Baccalaureate published worldwide the May 2021 results. Two days later [WIS posted on Facebook](#) its news about the WIS graduates' performance.



- ◆ 15 of 16 full diploma students successfully passed (93%) (here is a [summary of the IBDP!](#))
- ◆ 75% attained 2 or more bonus points (12 of 16) (IB assessment is explained [here](#))
- ◆ Half (8/16) achieved 35 or more points (here is an explanation of the IB points process).
- ◆ 33.56 - average WIS IBDP points and the favourable IBDP points distribution is shown [here](#).
- ◆ In comparison to IBDP points earned over the last 5 years, those for May 2021 were at the top.
- ◆ We had the best IB Theory of Knowledge [results](#) in the past 5 years. (Here is an [overview of TOK](#)).
- ◆ In terms of average IBDP points, the female students did better than the males.
- ◆ All except three of the WIS IBDP graduates improved on their results in comparison to their predicted grades.
- ◆ In terms of higher level and standard level classes, WIS IBDP students' results on average were below, by small margins, the world averages.
- ◆ The results for 9/23 (39%) of the WIS IBDP subjects [surpassed those of the world averages](#).
- ◆ In comparative terms with respect to the 'best' Subject Group results, the [grades were highest in the Group 2 Language Acquisition](#).

In terms of the why I attribute it to:

1. Ms. Reiff's, Ms. Gorelick's & Mr. Parson's incessant/impressive pandemic era care to the well-being of faculty and DP students;
2. Homeroom Teacher Edwina Rimmington's care of each and every member of the cohort;
3. The unique camaraderie which enabled them as a collective made it through as 'team';
4. New WIS curricular systems (Google Classroom, Course Overviews, Unit Plans, Bi-Weekly Planners) initiated/enforced with the appropriate measure of pressure and nudging by SLT;
5. The gentle approach with many important items (ie - mock exams renamed/redesigned as 'trial assessments' with less pressure for students);
6. The wise move to DP course level by several students.
7. Flexibility on DP shifts including late ones and allowances for late coursework submissions for students who struggled with well-being issues/sickness.
8. (Unrelated to WIS) - the IB's decision to reduce the assessment load (ie - DP History having fewer essays on Paper 2 and 3 & the same in most subjects).

Bottom line - our DP faculty did an impressive job enabling this cohort to hit an exceptional result under tough circumstances with the COVID-19 pandemic!

Rick Fitzpatrick, IBDP Coordinator

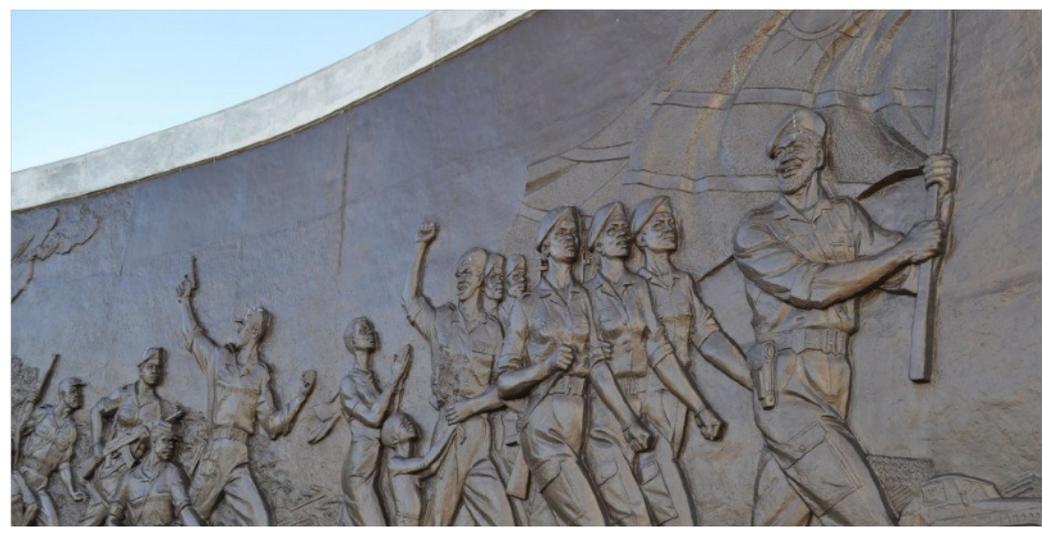
The WIS T-Shirts have arrived

This morning there was great excitement - our long awaited t-shirts have arrived. Thank you to Ms. Catherine who spearheaded the delivery and selling of the shirts and a BIG THANK YOU to our mums who helped sell the first lot.

The prices range from N\$150 for the very small sizes to N\$200 for the middle sized shirts to N\$250 for the small/medium/large/extra large sized shirts.



Heroes' Day Special Edition



To commemorate Heroes' Day, next week's edition will be about heroes: *Heroes of our past in the history of Namibia, but also heroes we want to honour and celebrate - they can be famous, but also those who are special to us personally.*

If you have a contribution to make for our special edition, we would like to include this in our Heroes' Day Edition.

For our international families it will be interesting to hear some narratives Namibians can share from their experiences in Namibia's fight for independence - celebrating the heroes of Namibia.

There might also be other heroes that can be celebrated - people who have devoted their lives to making the world a better place.

Please send you articles to Jolene, email: jnel@wis.edu.na by 14:00 on Tuesday, 24 August 2021!

Mutt-Strutt

MUTTS and **PUREBREDS** alike are invited to our dog walk to celebrate our canine companions!

The SPCA Windhoek is excited to participate in a national dog-walk day taking place with your SPCAs nationwide.

The first **100 entries** will receive a hamper with goodies from Hills and Bravecto.

4 September 2021

TIME: 1st sign-in from 07:30 | 1st walk at 08:00
2nd sign-in from 08:30 | 2nd walk at 09:00

PLACE: Eagles Restaurant | Avis Damm

ENTRY FEE: N\$100

Due to COVID-19 pre-registration is required.

PLEASE NOTE: Any COVID-19 regulations and precautions at that time will be adhered to.



REGISTRATION!
Closes **3 September @17:30**
at the **SPCA Windhoek.**



DON'T HAVE A DOG?
Come anyway and walk one of the SPCA dogs
(pre-registration required)

Thank you to our Sponsors: All entries may win a hamper from Hills or Bravecto in a lucky draw!



Greenspace



For more information contact us: SPCA Windhoek | 145 Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek | Tel: 061-238 654
Fax: 061-225 715 | Cell: 081-124 4520 Emergency (After Hours Only) | Email: info@spcawindhoek.org.na

